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# A Practical Guide for Teaching Cultural Awareness Using the Community as a Resource

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A Practical Guide for Teaching Cultural Awareness  
Using the Community as a Resource

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Master of Arts in  
Teaching degree at the School for Inter-  
national Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.

Elaine R. Ford  
Steven Cass

September 1, 1981

This project by Elaine Ford and Steven Cass is accepted in its present form.

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

### Description of Project

This guide is designed to present a practical guide for ESL teachers in the teaching of American Culture to high school students and adults while they are becoming more proficient in speaking English. The activities set forth in this guide are designed to encourage the development of cultural awareness within the students and teacher. In order to do this it is necessary for the individual students to examine their personal values, their own cultural background and values, and with that knowledge, compare and contrast the values of other students in the class who are of different backgrounds. This, hopefully, results in cultural awareness within the classroom. The logical next step is to observe and question Americans to learn about American culture.

Activities will concentrate on discussing and developing introspective and interpersonal skills which will then be applied in the classroom to the subject of varying cultures. Other activities will offer suggestions for applying the skill and knowledge learned within the group to activities in the community in the Outreach section. Projects, outreach worksheets and resources for teachers who may want to plan field trips are also included.

## Definition of Culture

When working with the culture of the target language the teacher has a great opportunity to present situations which help foreign students experience and understand their new environment. Culture is not only the economics, traditions, religion, music, or art of our society. It is also our attitude toward life, toward material objects, our values of friendship, family and loyalty.

Funk and Wagnall<sup>1</sup> defines culture as "the sum total of the attainments and activities of any specific period, race, or people including their implements, handicrafts, agriculture, economics, music, art, religious beliefs, traditions, language and story." Murielle Saville-Troike defines culture as "all of the systems, techniques and tools which make up a way of life".<sup>2</sup> E.T. Hall goes on to add to that, "Culture is a way of organizing life, of thinking and of conceiving the underlying assumptions about the family and the state, the economic system and even man himself".<sup>3</sup> He concludes by stating that "Culture cannot be explained. It must be experienced."

After consulting these three sources, one can see that culture defies a uniform definition. However, for our purposes we will assume that culture is a lifestyle shared by many, consisting of generally held beliefs and values that encompass most aspects of society.

1 Funk and Wagnalls, New Practical Standard Dictionary, 1962 p. 326

2 Saville-Troike, M. Foundations for Teaching English as a Second Language, (Prentice-Hall Inc. NJ 1976) p. 45

3 Hall, Edward T., The Silent Language, Doubleday & Co. NY 1959) p. 46



## Our Approach

In examining American culture while teaching English it is necessary to start at a common level with all the students. Our approach is to present students with classroom situations that will be a result of an examination of oneself and the values one holds, compared and contrasted with the values of others. After recognizing one's own values, it is easier to broaden one's horizon by comparing and contrasting other people's lifestyles and values with one's own. This cultural awareness can lead to cultural understanding when the reasons behind the differences in cultural values are discussed and explained in class. The effect of this study of cultural differences is best described by E.T. Hall in The Silent Language<sup>4</sup>. "The best reason for exposing oneself to foreign ways is to generate a sense of vitality and awareness, an interest in life which can come only through the shock and contrast of difference."

In the classroom it is our desire to offer an alternative learning environment where cooperation, creation, and sharing in learning is the ultimate goal. It is hoped the student will feel secure and comfortable with his/her classmates. To help accomplish this feeling of security and understanding it is beneficial to start working with something the student already knows, has experienced and can discuss without prior preparation: his own culture and values. After sharing these values with other students of different backgrounds,

4 Hall, Edward T., The Silent Language, Doubleday & Co. NY 1959)  
p. 53

hopefully, cultural awareness and understanding will begin to develop. We feel that cultural awareness is learned. It stems from an understanding of oneself and how one relates to others. This understanding comes from a close examination of one's attitudes, beliefs, and lifestyle. Its results are an understanding of why classmates behave the way they do.

To expand these thoughts on cultures and examine the American culture, we have chosen an experimental approach which takes the student outside of the classroom into the community. In the community, students can take a conscious look at how Americans interact with each other in social and occupational settings. They can observe the lifestyles and talk to the local residents or business people and draw upon their own cultural background to make their comparisons and conclusions. The focus here is to present relevant and interesting aspects of American culture in order to give more than a textbook meaning to the English language. It is for this reason we have decided on an approach that will utilize the vast resources available to the ELS teacher within the student himself, as well as both inside and outside the classroom.

## Organization

There are two major sections to this project. The first section introduces various skill areas that we feel are necessary for learning about a culture and for learning in general. The second involves using the community as a resource. The skills are presented through class-room activities with an emphasis on creating a secure environment where students can learn from each other with a minimum of teacher intervention, and where students can feel comfortable interacting with each other while learning English. Ideally, the end result is a class-room of individuals bonded together in a spirit of cooperation and concern for each other.

In the first section each skill unit is accomplished by an introduction to help the teacher understand its purpose and three lesson plans to aid in teaching the skill. These units work with 1) Introspective Skills: Self Awareness, Cultural Awareness, and Observation/Judgement, and 2) Interpersonal Skills: Group Introduction, Discussion Skills, Generalization/Stereotyping, Communication, and Interview Skills. This is by no means a comprehensive guide, but we do feel it provides a basis for exploring personal and interpersonal awareness as well as American culture.

The skill areas in section one need to be practiced constantly. Thus, because a particular activity has been completed it does not mean the skill area should be forgotten, but rather, reinforced when the opportunity arises. Because the units overlap there is no real starting point. However, the teacher may want to start with a group introduction

exercise and then work with personal awareness before continuing on to other skill areas.

The second section, Outreach: An Experimental Approach to American Culture, focuses on using the community as a resource. It is the practical implementation of the skills practiced in section one. This section gives ideas for taking the students outside of the class-room, having them make observations about Americans and American lifestyles, and asking them to draw conclusions about American culture based on what they have experienced or observed. We have included a guideline information sheet that helps the students prepare for the outreach activity and provides follow-up questions that clarify feeling, observations, and judgements that may have been formed during the trip. The sheet can also be used as a discussion starter.

We have chosen two field trip programs that we feel deal with topics relevant to all countries and social classes because they are concerned with basic needs of society. They are Energy and Food. We recognize there are vast differences in American living situations and attitudes toward conservation so we have opted to include a variety of energy sources, (solar, nuclear, fossil fuel and hydroelectric) and food sources, (super-markets, co-ops, general stores and corner variety). Site Reports is a listing of possible field trips in southern Vermont and western Massachusetts.

Outreach experiences (field trips) can be more than a "day off" from classes. They can be a unique learning

experience when given the proper preparation and treated from an analytical viewpoint. As all people see and experience things differently, these excursions into the community can offer the opportunity for sharing and learning in an experiential manner.

## Notes to the Teacher

Realizing that culture is present in all aspects of society, it follows that the teacher is a reflection of his/her culture. Too often a teacher forgets this fact and finds cultural differences only among the foreign students. Keeping in mind the teacher's influence in the classroom, s/he can become a role model for developing understanding and respect for cultural differences. The fact that different students have learned to learn in different ways can present difficulties among the students. Some cultures stress competition and aggressive behavior, whereas others value passiveness and submission. The teacher should not say that these values are wrong but offer an alternative learning environment where cooperation, creation, and sharing in learning is the ultimate goal.

When working with older adolescents and adults it is important for the teacher to realize that the students have acquired communication skills in another language. They have already set social community values and expectations. They have already developed a definite way of thinking, feeling and acting in their own culture and that all of these values should be accepted and considered worthy by both teachers and other students.

The teacher who is considering cultural awareness as the focus of his/her teaching, needs to keep a few things in mind:

Firstly, if you are teaching adults, remember they are not children and they should not be treated as such. A lack

of vocabulary does not indicate a lack of mature thinking. Secondly, step back! Give the students room to learn from each other. Do not constantly be the focal point of the class. This only fosters disinterest among the students for each other because they are always looking at you. Thirdly, be a positive role model by practicing patience and showing interest in what a student is saying. Given the positive environment, students who are afraid to speak may opt to contribute and hopefully other students will show additional interest. Fourthly, show students that you are listening by summarizing what they have said. You can encourage other students to do this also. Then, if there is a misunderstanding, the student can clarify the situation. This helps the student to have a feeling of self-worth because his thoughts did not fall on deaf ears. The class as a whole will eventually start to work collectively rather than competitively. This will make working on projects more beneficial because faster students will help slower ones and the slower students will feel supported, not criticized. As a result, a comfortable and positive learning environment will have been created in which to learn about American culture.

SECTION I

SKILLS; INTROSPECTIVE AND INTERPERSONAL



## Section I

### Skills: Introspective and Interpersonal

In the ELS classroom the teacher is dealing with more than teaching English. S/he is coping with different cultural backgrounds, different value systems, language barriers and varying personalities. All of these factors can affect the group dynamics or interaction that occurs within the classroom. In Section I we hope to show how these differences can be used to help form good relationships between the students by fostering understanding and tolerance among members of the class. This is accomplished by creating a learning environment where students can learn from each other. Section I is divided into two skill areas: Personal Growth and Group or Social Awareness, and consists of activities designed to help students work on these skills.

A. The Personal Growth subdivision concentrates on the areas of self-awareness, cultural awareness, and observation/judgement. Self-awareness asks students to examine their attitudes, values, beliefs, perceptions and concerns. These personal characteristics can then be contrasted with the target culture and other student's values and concerns. Cultural Awareness, both personal and interpersonal, results when students become aware of other people, how they see themselves, how they react to others and how that reaction affects their values. In effect, it helps the students discover

the influence their native cultures have on their thought processes and lifestyles in general. Hopefully, this discovery will provide the dynamics necessary to have students search for the reasoning behind different values in a culture and their effect on personalities and lifestyles. Observation and judgement provides the more mechanical skills for identifying cultural differences.

1. Self-Awareness asks the students to take a look at themselves, their attitudes, values, beliefs, perceptions, and concerns and to share these perceptions with the other students. This unit is meant to answer the question: Do we see ourselves as others see us? It is an opportunity for students to take an in-depth look at how they function and relate to other people. There is another activity that asks a student to look at his/her values and the rationale behind decision-making. The objective of this unit is to have students take a look at themselves while presenting themselves as individuals to other members of the group.

2. Cultural Awareness gives each student a chance to discuss his/her values, beliefs, or concerns and relate them to his/her country. Differences and similarities of lifestyles between countries can be emphasized. This section offers activities to demonstrate how different cultures cope with everyday living. During the presentation students may ask questions about these differences. Hopefully they will begin to understand these cultural differences by comparing

and contrasting them with their own values. Questions, when answered by a "friend", can open their minds to foreign ideas and develop a tolerance to alternative cultures.

3.     Observation/Judgement is a skill that needs conscious development. An observation is a statement of fact that is made when one sees or notices something objectively. On the other hand, a judgement is a statement of opinion that results from applying some value system to an observation. This section tries to distinguish between what really is and what is perceived by an individual. Too often a person will see something and attach his/her own personal cultural values to this occurrence. The conclusion may not always be correct. It is important for the student to realize that they see life through their own culture's eyes.

B. The Group or Social Awareness skills have four goals. The first goal is to make the students feel comfortable with one another. The second goal is to develop a feeling of community within the class. The third is to develop an awareness of the individual within group situations. The fourth is to develop the skill of using precise language; that is, having students say what they mean in a clear manner so that they can be easily understood.

1. The first unit under Social Awareness, Group Introduction aims to help the students interact in a positive way with each other verbally and non-verbally. The lessons suggested are friendship-making activities designed to help students relax and have fun while sharing a little information about themselves. These activities are recommended for the first week of class.

2. Generalization/Stereotype focuses more closely on misconceptions held about various foreigners and Americans. A generalization is formed when a person notes particular traits or occurrences and forms the opinion that these are general truths, common qualities or happenings. A stereotype, for our purposes, is formed when these generalizations are applied to specific nationalities and cultures. This section is designed to have students evaluate the origins of stereotyping and form criteria needed to make valid generalizations.

3. Discussion Skills aims at making the student aware of the dynamics involved in a discussion. Too often, conversations tend to be monopolized or led astray by the two or three more verbal students in the class. This unit emphasizes the need for all students to contribute, listen, summarize and stick to the topic at hand.

4. Communication Skills works with activities designed to force the student to use clear, precise language whether summarizing, telling a story, or giving directions. Some students will speak before thinking. The result is often a long confusing oration. This unit stresses awareness of language and its usage.

5. Interview Skills also works with the concept of precise language, but posed in the form of questions. The art of questioning is in many cases culturally bound because in most countries there are questions that are considered acceptable and appropriate or rude and inappropriate (e.g. age, weight, salary.) This unit is also a forerunner for the field trips presented in the section of this paper.

As stated in the introduction, all of these units overlap and there is no starting point per se. However, we do not recommend working with generalization and stereotyping before forming some foundation for interpersonal relationships.

For the teacher who does not wish to tackle a complete cultural unit some of the activities can be used as a change of pace from standard classroom activities.

Feedback is frequently given as the last step of each activity. It is an affective response to the activity. Each student has the opportunity to state what s/he liked or did not like about the activity, to offer suggestions for improvement, and to explain how s/he felt while completing the activity. In the beginning it may be necessary for teachers to ask general questions concerning how the student reacted to playing a part, or speaking before his peers, or whether s/he felt s/he benefited sufficiently from the activity. Later on, it becomes more natural and less prompting is needed. When students share their feelings a deeper concern for the other members of the class evolves and a more secure environment results. It also indicates to the teacher how successful the activity was and can help in the planning of future activities. We recognize the value of feedback and have adapted it as part of our learning experience.

SELF AWARENESS

## SELF-AWARENESS\*

In developing self-awareness the student is encouraged to take an analytical view of his/her attitudes, values, beliefs and concerns. Through a structured exercise, he has an opportunity to express these views non-verbally through selecting pictures or using Cuisenaire Rods. Then, the student verbally explains why the pictures were chosen or what significance different rods have in relation to the student's feelings about his/her creation. If a student gains a better understanding of him/herself and shares this, all students will have the opportunity to know him/her better. This will "break the ice" so that true friendships can be formed, and a genuine concern for each other can be established. These exercises help the students to identify cultural differences and personal feelings and to share them with other students. Group support is needed when sharing feelings: a secure environment is essential.

We offer three activities in the skill area of Self-Awareness. We do not recommend that you do all of these activities with the same class. We wish only to suggest a variety of possibilities. The teacher may think of additional exercises to help the student become more aware of him/herself.

\* Because activities deal with personal feelings, it may be better to start with a Group Introduction exercise (p. 46) before asking the students to participate in a Self-Awareness exercise.



COLLAGE SELF PORTRAIT

This activity is designed to give students an opportunity to express and represent themselves in a non-verbal manner. It requires that the student becomes self analytical. S/He must take a critical look at him/herself. The student will again use these critical and analytical skills when studying culture and cultural values. It is easier and perhaps wiser to start with the personal analysis and then expand to broader more general ideas.

Magazines are used to help create the "self portrait". Because a collage is also an art form, this activity leaves room for creativity and expression.

COLLAGE SELF PORTRAIT

Goals: To encourage students to look at themselves objectively.

To have students experience how they see themselves and how others see them.

Objectives: To have students portray an image of themselves through the use of magazine pictures.

Materials: Scissors, magazines, glue, construction paper.

Procedure:

- 1 - Explain what a collage is.
- 2 - Show materials.
- 3 - Ask students to create self portraits from materials available.
- 4 - Hang collages so that they may be seen by all students.
- 5 - Allow students to describe their collages or ask questions, or share feelings.
- 6 - Ask for reactions to the exercise.  
(Feedback)

Suggestions: Emphasize that all materials can be used: pictures, letters, colors, shapes.

Set a time limit so that students will have completed their collages at about the same time.

ROD\* IMAGERY

This activity is designed for students to take a critical look at themselves, express their self-image in a non-verbal manner, and then discuss their interpretation of their rod image with their classmates. Sharing such intimate personal feelings in a secure classroom atmosphere aids in creating a cooperative, understanding, learning situation. Since this activity involves a great deal of personal investment it would be better to use it after the class had had a few Group Introduction exercises. (p 46)

We recommend the use of this activity with fairly small classes. (12 Students or less)

\*Cuisenaire rods are different colored sticks of varying length that can be purchased at an educational supply store.

ROD IMAGERY

Goals: To create a secure environment where students can look at themselves critically.

To encourage a non-competitive learning environment.

To foster communication between students with a minimal amount of teacher interference.

Objectives: To have students produce an image of themselves using rods.

To provide an opportunity for students to share their feelings and thoughts about themselves.

Materials: Box of Cuisenaire Rods.

Procedures: 1 - Seat students around large table.

2 - Dump the box of rods in center of table.

3 - Ask students to make a representation of themselves using the rods.

4 - Have a volunteer explain his/her figure.

5 - Have other students one at a time offer an interpretation of the volunteer's rod image.

6 - Continue until all students have had an opportunity to explain their rod image.

7 - Feedback.

Suggestions: If no large table is available, use the floor.

Do not force the student to present an explanation if he/she prefers not to.

Contributed by Deborah Wilson, MAT X

RANK ORDER\*

This activity can be used to introduce students to the decision-making process. It focuses on probing into the rationale for decision-making. By developing an open and secure atmosphere for expressing divergent ideas the students will be better prepared to formulate and present their thoughts.

This activity should be prefaced by some discussion of values and value judgements because the teacher will be asking questions that require students to make value judgements.

Students should be encouraged to share their answers but if a student does not wish to answer the group should accept this fact without prodding.

The teacher functions as a model here, presenting five rank order questions. The students will be asked to formulate their own questions which they will ask later.

\* Adapted from Values Clarification (see bibliography)

RANK ORDER

Goals: To demonstrate to the students that many issues require more thoughtful consideration than is usually given them.

To cause students to take an intrinsic look at themselves and their preferences.

Objectives: To give students an opportunity to practice choosing among alternatives and affirming and explaining their choices publicly.

To have students form 7 questions, each having 3 answers to rank in order of preference.

To have students practice sharing their thoughts with the class.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Explain that 5 questions will be presented that will require students to look deeper into themselves and make value judgements.
  - 2 - Write questions and alternatives on board
  - 3 - Ask students to number the alternatives 1, 2, or 3 according to preference.
  - 4 - Ask students to read their preferences.
  - 5 - Have class discuss reasons for various choices.
  - 6 - Ask students to formulate seven questions using the models given.
  - 7 - Have each student offer one question from his list for classmates to rank in order of preference.
  - 8 - Discuss answers - how they were chosen and how students felt while making the decisions.

Suggestions: Depending on the time and energy level of class, the formulating of the student questions can be assigned as homework rather than classwork.

RANK ORDER Cont'd

EXAMPLES:

What would you rather do?

- ☐ Read a book
- ☐ Make a new friend
- ☐ Go on a long vacation

Where would you rather be on a Saturday afternoon?

- ☐ At the beach
- ☐ In the woods
- ☐ In a clothing store

Which is the most important in a friendship?

- ☐ Loyalty
- ☐ Generosity
- ☐ Honesty

How do you have the most fun?

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ With a few friends
- ☐ In a large group

Where would you most like to visit?

- ☐ England
- ☐ Russia
- ☐ China

CULTURAL AWARENESS



## Cultural Awareness

In developing self-awareness we asked the students to take a look at their attitudes, values, beliefs, self-perceptions and concerns. In developing cultural awareness we will examine the influence their native country has on these factors. We also expand the observations to include habits and appropriate behavior. We ask the students how they feel about coming from the country they do and if they would rather live somewhere else. These questions cause the students to focus on themselves as cultural beings. By examining their likes, dislikes and preferences they can understand that they are living products of the culture of their native country.

The sharing in learning comes when the students share what they learned about themselves from the various activities. Emphasis is placed on comparing lifestyles and routines. After examining the cultural differences in class, hopefully, the students will be able to transfer this skill to U.S. culture outside the classroom.

PEER TEACHING

This activity asks the student to share a particular aspect of their culture with other members of the class. It is designed to foster interest in the class toward other traditions and habits world wide. It also gives students an opportunity to talk about something that they already know. It is a time for students to interact with minimal teacher interference and to give support to one another by displaying interest in the speakers' country.

The teacher or students as a group may pick one topic that all students can present from their different viewpoints. Or the topics can be left up to the individual students to choose.

The presentation should be short and fairly informal. Materials should be supplied by the pupils. At least three days notice should be given to the students before their presentations. It is not necessary to have all presentations the same day. Two per day is sufficient. Students from the same country may work together on a presentation. If any pupil strongly opposes doing a presentation he/she need not participate. Sample topics should be:

- How to take a Japanese bath.
- Carnival in my country.
- How we spend our free time.
- Origami.
- Attitude toward senior citizens.
- Native foods.
- The role of women in my country.
- Dating and marriage.
- The role of the family.

PEER TEACHING

- Goals:
- To give students a chance to talk about a topic that holds a particular interest to them.
  - To acquaint the students with each other and the diverse lifestyles and values they represent.
  - To have students examine their own cultural values.
  - To help students share cultural values with fellow classmates.
- Objectives:
- To have each student or group of students introduce one particular aspect of their culture through a classroom presentation.
  - To have students practice formulating questions.
- Materials:
- Provided by the students.
  - Sign-up sheet with days and hours for presentations.
- Procedure:
- Preparation.
- 1 - Inform students they will be asked to give a 15 minute presentation pertaining to some aspect of their native country.
  - 2 - Ask students for topic suggestions or ideas; if necessary, give examples.
  - 3 - Pass out sign-up sheet so students will know the day and hour of their presentation.
- Presentation Day.
- 4 - Ask assigned student(s) to give presentation.
  - 5 - Instruct students to formulate and write down a few questions for the speaker.
  - 6 - Use students' questions to start discussion.
  - 7 - Follow-up: After all presentations, the students could participate in an activity such as I Learned... (see p.73 Discussion Skills).

VALUES GEOGRAPHY

This activity is designed to give the students the opportunity to share personal and cultural ideas and feelings in a relaxed informal atmosphere. It provides the structure and stimulus for students to reflect on the deeper less apparent values which influence and motivate feelings and actions. Sharing thoughts concerning the student's homeland will, hopefully, lead to the beginning of an understanding and appreciation for each other's culture and a feeling of camaraderie within the class.

Students will be responding to various questions by marking locations on a world map and thinking about the location: What they liked about it. What they didn't like about it. The significance of the location in their life.

Emphasis should be placed on having students share their thoughts with each other because when students have different viewpoints and explain them the basis for cultural understanding is being founded.

VALUES GEOGRAPHY

- Goals:
- To provide an activity in which students can reflect on their own feelings concerning geographical locations of importance to them.
  - To assist students in comparing cultural values.
  - To increase group communication.
- Objectives:
- To give students the opportunity to share important thoughts and feelings in pairs.
  - To have students respond to questions by marking a particular geographic location.
- Materials:
- Blank world maps for each student.
  - 3 large world maps, magic markers.
- Procedure:
- 1 - Distribute blank world maps.
  - 2 - Ask 5-6 questions that require a geographic and emotional response, allowing 2-3 minutes between questions to mark map and write answers. (see sample questions attached)
  - 3 - Hang up 3 large world maps.
  - 4 - Divide students into three groups.
  - 5 - Ask students to read first question aloud.
  - 6 - Have several students point out the location on the map which answers the questions.
  - 7 - Instruct students to share their ideas on the rest of the question with a partner who is closest to them on the map.
  - 8 - Repeat activity using another question and different pupils.

VALUES GEOGRAPHY Cont'd

- 9 - Feedback: Describe feelings and insights during activity. Differences in opinion.
- 10 - Follow-up: Another day the students could formulate their own questions to ask the class.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Where were you born?

What do you remember most about that place?

What did your house look like?

Where are you from now?

Are you proud to be associated with that part of your country? Why or why not?

Where would you like to live for a year?

What is the climate there?

What makes you want to go there?

If you wanted to help people in a country other than your own, where would you go?

Why would you go there?

What service can you provide?

What country would you definitely NOT want to live in?

Why don't you like that country?

From where or whom did you get your information?

TIPS TO A FOREIGNER

Many cultural idiosyncracies can be pointed out when instructing a foreigner as to his appropriate behavior in a strange country. This activity encourages students to examine the culture and customs of their native country.

The purpose is twofold: To have students develop a cultural awareness of themselves as a product of their native country, and to inform other students of valuable information necessary for classmates intending to travel to other foreign countries.

The format can be introduced in the form of a letter that has been received by a foreign student from a friend in America that helped him prepare for his visit to the U.S. The letter should include 3 examples of what a visitor should do, and 3 examples of what s/he should not do. See attached sample letter.

TIPS TO A FOREIGNER

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Ho Jen:

During my three months here in San Francisco I've learned a lot about the U.S. and Americans. Some things I learned by making mistakes, so here are some tips for you.

Bring lots of money. The U.S. is very expensive. Use American Express Travellers Checks because it is dangerous to carry too much cash in the city.

Always give a tip to your waiter, waitress or taxi cab driver. The tip is not usually included in the bill. About 15% of the bill is appropriate. This will make people be friendlier to you and you will get good service if you need their services again.

Ask people you have met to your house for dinner. Americans love Chinese food, especially when it is authentic. You won't need to think of anything to say because your guests are sure to ask you how you prepared the food and soon everyone will be talking as friends.

Don't wait for a personal invitation to an informal party. Usually someone will tell you, "There's a party at my house tonight". That usually means it's an open party and that everyone is invited. You should bring your own liquor or soft drink because the host only supplies the glasses, ice and snacks.

If someone asks you if you want to go out to dinner with them don't expect them to pay for you; that's just a way of spending time together. Sometimes a person will pay for you, but usually, you should offer to pay for yourself.

Don't be late. If you have an appointment for 8:30 be there at 8:30. Americans respect time and are insulted if you're more than 15 minutes late.

I hope I have been of some help to you. Good luck in Los Angeles. I'll see you in four months.

Your friend,

Soo Hoo



TIPS TO A FOREIGNER

Goals:

To have students start developing a cultural awareness of themselves as a product of their native country.

To have students explain cultural traits of their countries.

To inform other students of the special cultural aspects of other countries.

Objectives:

To have each student write a letter giving 3 examples of what a foreigner should and should not do in his/her country.

To introduce students to the greeting, headings, and closing common to American letter writing.

Materials:

One copy of the attached sample letter for each student, or similiar type letter composed by the teacher.

Procedure:

- 1 - Pass out the letter.
- 2 - Examine the vocabulary with class.
- 3 - Discuss the ideas in the letter. Is this good advice? Are the examples real?
- 4 - Discuss the format of the letter: Greeting, Body, Closing and variations.
- 5 - Discuss the problem of making friends in the U.S. Is it easy or difficult? What can you do to make friends?
- 6 - Homework assignment: Have each student write a letter of advice to a friends who is planning on visiting his/her native country. Letter must contain 3 "Do's" and 3 "Don'ts".
- 7 - Follow-up: Have the students exchange their letters with other students to read. Then, share one or two examples from each letter with the class. Talk about what they have learned about cutoms in different foreign countries. What did they find surprising? What had they known already?

OBSERVATION/JUDGEMENT

## Observation/Judgement

Western scientists affirm there is no such thing as total objectivity. This is because we all see or observe according to the way we have been taught to see. The teaching comes from a cultural basis. Consciously or unconsciously we make judgements about everything that affect us. Through a conscious effort however, we can begin to distinguish between what is a reality and the perception of that reality. This is especially important when studying culture because the initial reactions or judgements often cloud what has happened or been observed and the meaning of the experience is lost or misconstrued.

This section is aimed at helping the student to distinguish between his observations and his judgements. Hopefully, the result will be an awareness within the student of how his/her culture affects his perceptions of U.S. culture and other cultures that he/she encounters. It provides the foundation for a more open and accepting view of differences between cultures.

### PICTURE ACTIVITY

This is the introductory activity for the concept of Observation vs. Judgement. It is designed to demonstrate to the students that they do not always see things objectively. It is an unorthodox approach because no discussion of observation or judgement should precede activity. This is strictly experiential.

It is recommended that a picture of a fairly expressionless person be used. The more ambiguous the picture the more the student will tend to draw conclusions or make judgements rather than observations. Generally, when the students are asked what they see in the picture, they will respond, "He looks lonely. He looks happy." etc., rather than, "He is wearing a red shirt and blue pants."

It is important to have the students work alone at first. They will be asked to write down everything they see in the picture. A general discussion will then ensue in which the students, as a group, will define the words observation and judgement. After the discussion they will be able to look back on their own comments and differentiate between observations and judgements.

PICTURE ACTIVITY

- Goals:**
- To introduce the concepts of observation and judgement.
  - To distinguish between an observation and a judgement.
  - To start students thinking about how they perceive their environment and how their culture affects their perception.
- Objectives:**
- To have each student make 5 or more observations about a picture.
  - To give an experiential approach to distinguishing between an observation and judgement.
  - To have students make two lists, separating observations from judgements.
- Materials:**
- One slightly ambiguous picture. Chalk, chalk-board or mural paper and magic markers.
- Procedure:**
- 1 - Present picture to class.
  - 2 - Allow 3-5 minutes for the students to study the picture.
  - 3 - Ask students to write down everything they "see" in the picture.
  - 4 - Have volunteers write observations of the students on the blackboard or mural paper without any discussion.
  - 5 - Ask if anyone can explain the word observation.
  - 6 - Ask if anyone can explain the word judgement.

PICTURE ACTIVITY Cont'd

- 7 - Have a short discussion comparing the two concepts.
- 8 - Ask the class to divide the chalkboard list into observations and judgements.
- 9 - Initiate a discussion concerning the importance of distinguishing between observation and judgement in regards to looking at cultural differences.

Suggestion: Do not settle differences of opinion. Let students work them out themselves.

DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

This activity is designed to make students realize how differently they interpret what they see. It also forces students to start consciously thinking and observing when outside the classroom. This activity can be assigned for homework or done as a short field trip during class time. It is especially good preparation for larger field trips that may be taken later in the session.

Three student are assigned to stand at the same location, such as a street corner, for a designated period of time. Their task it to observe and write down what they notice and the conclusions that they draw. Later, they will discuss what their observations prompted them to think about American culture. Examples:

I notice a lot of big cars.

Americans like luxury.  
Americans aren't energy  
conscious.

Many people aren't wearing  
coats.

Americans are accustomed to  
colder weather than I am.  
A sweater is enough for most  
Americans in this weather.

The object is to get students to see that same things but possibly interpret them differently. One student may notice a person or occurance that another won't. All of these differences can be pointed out to stress how culturally affected our observations are, and how much we can learn by closely observing everyday occurrences.

NOTE: This activity should follow the Picture Activity and some discussion of cultural awareness and American culture.

## Observation/Judgement

### DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

- Goals:
- To get students consciously observing U.S. lifestyle for clues about American culture.
  - To have students realize how one aspect of everyday life can be interpreted differently by people from various backgrounds.
  - To point out the vast resources outside of the classroom that are available to students.

- Objectives:
- To have students make observations about U.S. culture outside the classroom.
  - To have students compare their assumptions about U.S. culture.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Instruct students to stand in groups of three at various locations near school (street corners, bus stops) and observe what happens during a designated period.
  - 2 - Tell the students not to talk while observing but rather to write down what they see, what occurs, and their comments and conclusions.
  - 3 - After returning to class, and remaining in the original groups of three, have students compare:  
1) what they observed, 2) what ideas their observations gave them about U.S. culture, 3) differences in ideas or conclusions.
  - 4 - Open discussion to class by having students share significant conclusions concerning U.S. culture.
  - 5 - Feedback.

- Suggestions:
- At observation points students may stand looking in different directions or all in the same direction, but this should be decided by class before they leave school. Emphasize that they are not to comment to each other while observing.



THE ORANGE

This activity is aimed at having students differentiate between an observation expressed in the form of a description, and a judgement or student-imposed ideas that color that description.

The teacher brings in a half-peeled orange and places it on a desk and asks the students to describe it in writing. The result is usually a story about how the person was called away and had to leave the orange for later. Often the factual description is completely lost. Description is difficult for foreign students because frequently they cannot find the exact word they want. The teacher can choose an object other than an orange, depending on the level of the class: however, vocabulary level should be a major consideration. The object here is not to discourage creative writing but to have students realize how influenced their observations are by their own thoughts.

This activity does not require preparation in Cultural Awareness or other skills included in this section, but during the follow-up discussion the purpose for the activity should be made clear.

THE ORANGE

Goals: To have students understand the difference between description (observation) and fiction (telling a story developed in the mind).

To emphasize the need to differentiate between observation and opinion according to the task at hand.

Objectives: To have students write a factual description of an object.

To give students practice in precise descriptive language.

Materials: An orange or other object.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Place a half-peeled orange on desk.
  - 2 - Ask students to write a short description of the object in 10-15 minutes.
  - 3 - Have students read aloud their descriptions in pairs, small groups, or to the class.
  - 4 - Initiate a discussion about description and what should be included in a description. (shape, size, color, texture, material, etc.)
  - 5 - Ask students to write a new description of the object.
  - 6 - Follow-up

Have the class compose a short paragraph on the board describing the object.

or

Have the students show they've understood the lesson by writing a description and a story with an explanation of why they wrote the two paragraphs differently.

GROUP INTRODUCTION

## GROUP INTRODUCTION

The first few days of class are important in setting the tone for the entire session. The activities chosen at this time should focus on putting the students at ease and having them feel secure in their new environment. It is also the time to have students focus on one another and hopefully, realize the mixture of interests and information each person has to share. By discovering these interests, each person becomes an individual in the eyes of the others, thus laying the groundwork for mutual respect.

It is also advisable to choose activities in which students need to work cooperatively. In this way the shier members of the class will be encourage to participate without feeling too much pressure and students will become accustomed to working together, giving a sense of community to the class.

## Group Introduction

### LABELING A MAP

This activity is designed to acquaint students with each other and their new surroundings. Students are given an opportunity to work cooperatively in a relaxed, informal atmosphere.

There are many variations to this activity. We present the idea of using mural paper and magic markers to draw a local map. If students are not familiar with the area, the teacher could draw an unlabeled map and the students could be sent out to explore the local area. The labeling of landmarks could be done after exploring. Students can also be placed in teams and given the task of finding movie theaters, clothing stores, historic sites, hospitals or clinics etc.

By working in small groups or teams students may become "courageous" in their exploring; seeking out places they never would have gone to alone. Thus, they are acquainting themselves more with the community and the American culture.

## Group Introduction

### LABELING A MAP

**Goals:** To provide a cooperative and secure setting for students to engage in a group project.

To familiarize the foreign students with local and national geography.

(If students are sent out of the classroom to explore) - To give the students a feeling of confidence that they can function in their new location.

**Objectives:** To produce a local map and United States map labeled by the students.

To get students out of their seats to explore.

**Materials:** Mural paper, magic markers, scissors, Scotch tape, map of U.S., map of the community.

**Procedure:**

- 1 - Explain that a map of U.S. will be drawn by one group of students and that a map of the local area will be drawn by other students.
- 2 - Tape pieces of mural paper together to make a giant surface on which to draw maps.
- 3 - Hang model maps for viewing.
- 4 - Class members decide which map they wish to work on.
- 5 - Each student attempts to label as many sights or locations as possible.. (At least 3)
- 6 - Allow 45 minutes working time.
- 7 - Feedback. Class discusses map making process and the thoughts and feelings it provoked.

**Follow-up:** Students could design and write a foreign students guide to U.S. or local community. (banks, theaters, etc.) This activity could take from 2-10 class periods depending on available time. The organization and direction of the guides should be left up to the students. This is advised for upper level students.

Contributed by Lauren Reed MAT'X

## Group Introduction

### FIND SOMEONE WHO ...

This is a short exercise aimed at getting students out of their seats and questioning one another. It is designed to have students find out about each other's families, activities and interests, in a non-threatening environment

Advanced preparation is required by the teacher. A day before or during registration, information sheets should be filled out by the students answering such questions as:

How many people in your family?  
Where were you born?  
How many languages do you speak? What are they?  
How many brothers and sisters do you have?  
What are your hobbies?  
In what other foreign countries have you travelled?  
What is your favorite city in the world?  
Do you play a musical instrument? If so, what?

The entire activity takes about 10-15 minutes. Communication between students with minimal teacher interference is important.

## Group Introduction

### FIND SOMEONE WHO ...

Goals: To foster communication between students.

To establish a situation in which students interact in a loosely structured activity.

Objectives: To have students find out more information about their classmates.

To have students discover which classmates fit the descriptions given.

To get students out of their seats.

Materials: Mimeo sheet prepared by the teacher.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Distribute handouts with 20 descriptive sentences.
  - 2 - Explain that the students are to find one or more classmates that fit a given description.
  - 3 - Instruct students to roam around until they have a name for all of the sentences.
  - 4 - When students are finished, share the results in an informal discussion.

Examples: Find someone who...

- \_\_\_\_\_ Speaks three languages.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Likes photography.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has three brothers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has been to the U.S. before.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is married with two children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plays the guitar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Types well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Likes snakes.



## Group Introduction

### CHANGE OF PACE

This activity requires strong observational skills. Students sit on the floor and look closely at each other. The activity is designed to break through the initial self-consciousness a person feels when among people s/he doesn't know well. Although the exercise usually starts out in an awkward manner, the end result is usually a lot of conversation with students laughing at themselves because they acted in an "unclassroom-like" role.

This activity can be threatening in the beginning of a course because it requires such close scrutiny on the part of the pupils. Therefore, we would not suggest using it the first week with a heavily Asian populated class because it requires looking directly at your partner and observing all of his/her clothing, facial expressions, etc. This problem could possibly be alleviated by placing members of the same sex together.

## Group Introduction

### CHANGE OF PACE

Goals: To break through student's feelings of self-consciousness.

To develop observational skills.

Objectives: To have students work in pairs.  
To have each student identify changes his/her partner has made in his/her appearance.

Materials: None.

Procedure:

- 1 - Instruct the students to pick a partner and sit in the floor facing their partner.
- 2 - Give students one minute to closely observe the other person's attire.
- 3 - Instruct students to turn back to back and make 5 changes in their appearance.
- 4 - Instruct students to face each other again and identify the 5 changes.
- 5 - Repeat process 3 times. Students now have made 15 changes.
- 6 - Feedback.

GENERALIZATION/STEREOTYPE

## Generalization/Stereotypes

To generalize is to form a general law or principle from particulars. To stereotype is to have a firmly fixed, or unalterable idea. In our task of examining culture we wish to apply these generalizations and stereotypes to nationalities, lifestyles, habits and values of both Americans and foreigners.

We do not wish to promote generalizing and stereotyping but rather, examine these components of culture and find the reasons for their existence. We also find the need to expose the fact that often generalizations are made when they are not valid and set some type of criteria for generalizing. It is also desired that objectivity be demonstrated when examining culture because at times, preconceived notions may cloud cultural observations.

### TYPICAL DRAWING

This activity is designed to deal with the issue of stereotyping in a creative, fun way. Students will be asked to draw a typical person from a foreign country including as many stereotypes as possible. Ex. Mexican man with a moustache, wearing a sombrero and mariachi suit, holding a bottle of tequila. The concept of stereotypes should be discussed before beginning the actual drawing, explaining that they are broad generalizations made about a group and that they do not always accurately portray the group.

The drawings can be done on a large piece of mural paper. If the class is large, two students can work together, but all nationalities within the class should be drawn. The idea is to get students working together and having fun while realizing the stereotypes associated with their countries. Frequently, when a student cannot think of anything to draw, the pupil from that country will offer ideas. If one person is an especially good artist, students may ask him/her to draw for them according to their specifications. However, good artistry should not be stressed as necessary for this activity. Best results are achieved when the students know each other fairly well and relate freely and openly.

TYPICAL DRAWING

Goals: To create a friendly non-threatening atmosphere in which students feel secure in expressing opinions.

To present the concept of stereotyping in a meaningful context.

To expose students to stereotypes of their own country.

Objectives: To have all the student's nationalities represented in picture form.

To have students make observations concerning other classmate's drawings.

To have students give reactions and explanations of the stereotype drawings made of the people of their country.

Materials: Mural paper, different colored markers.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Explain that typical people from each country will be drawn on mural paper.
  - 2 - List all nationalities of class on board.
  - 3 - Have students choose a nationality to draw other than their own.
  - 4 - Roll out mural paper and let students choose the spot on which they want to work.
  - 5 - Hang up finished drawings for all to see.
  - 6 - Ask the students for observations.
  - 7 - Ask each student to react to the drawing stereotype from his/her country.
  - 8 - Ask students why they drew what they did, and whether or not they agree with the ideas expressed in the drawing.
  - 9 - Have nationality group react to drawings.

## NATIONALITY STEREOTYPES

This activity demonstrates stereotypes held by the students toward nationalities and countries. It also gives students from various countries a chance to explain or contradict these stereotypes. Since the student is an individual and the stereotype is a broad generalization made about a group of people, it is easy to contrast between the individual and the generalization. It is our hope that this activity will emphasize the limitations in stereotyping.

Because students are asked to write down stereotypes about different countries, it should be stressed that these ideas are typical generalizations and may not reflect the true feelings of the students. Also, the comments should be taken as examples of stereotyping not personal attacks on a country of nationality.

Before starting this activity the teacher should initiate a discussion about generalizations and stereotypes. The United States should be included in the list of countries stereotyped, and should be discussed first. If the teacher responds to these stereotypes without showing offense s/he sets the tone for an open-minded discussion. We would also recommend doing this activity with a class that knows each other fairly well.

NATIONALITY STEREOTYPES

Goals: To give students the opportunity to express their thoughts concerning other nationalities.

To give students an opportunity to see and respond to the stereotypes others hold concerning their own nationality.

To point out the limitations of stereotypes.

Objectives: To have each student write down 3 stereotypes concerning each country mentioned.

To have students respond to the majority of statements written about his/her nationality.

To have students attempt to explain the origin of stereotypes made about their country and other countries.

Materials: Ditto master, paper and/or photocopy machine.

Procedure: First day:

- 1 - Initiate a discussion about stereotypes.
- 2 - Write down names of all countries that are represented by the students in the class plus the United States.
- 3 - Instruct the class to write 3-5 stereotypes s/he thinks of when each country is mentioned.
- 4 - Collect all papers.
- 5 - Sort all the responses for each country.
- 6 - Type the completed list. Do not repeat duplicated items under same country.
- 7 - Make enough copies for each member of class.



NATIONALITY STEREOTYPES Cont'd

Next day:

- 8 - Pass out stereotype list.
- 9 - Allow several minutes for pupils to read list.
- 10 - Ask for general observations and comments.
- 11 - Ask for comments on what was written about U.S.
- 12 - Respond to what was written about the U.S. stereotype by explaining possible reasons for the stereotypes. Ex. Americans are fat. "Well it's true that many Americans are overweight. Of course not all of us are. Some reasons for this are ...."
- 13 - Ask for volunteers to discuss, refute, or confirm the comments that have been written about stereotypes in their country.
- 14 - Ask if stereotypes of people from different countries have changed or been reinforced since the students have been exposed to individuals from other countries.

SENTENCE COMPLETION

This activity is designed to reveal the stereotypes members of the class hold in regards to Americans and their values. It is a word association activity because students are asked to fill in sentences with the first word that comes to mind. Students need not put their names on their papers. Anonymity is essential for receiving honest answers. Students should be aware that this activity is not a test so there is no correct or incorrect answer.

It is an idea sharing session as well as a critical look at American life, culture, and values. Because many of the questions stimulate lengthy discussions, the teacher may want to consider only two questions per day.

We offer 6 sample questions. The teacher may wish to add more, depending on the needs of his/her class.

- 1 - Americans are \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 - American men are \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 - American women are \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 - Americans highly value \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 - Americans think that family life is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 - Americans think that foreigners are \_\_\_\_\_.

SENTENCE COMPLETION

Goals: To introduce the idea of generalization and stereotyping.

To discover how stereotypes are formed.

To give students the opportunity to work with the concepts of generalization and stereotyping in a meaningful context.

Objectives: To have students complete the majority of the sentences given.

To give students the opportunity to share their ideas concerning Americans.

To have students offer ideas as to why sentences were completed that way they were.

Materials: Ditto sheet with incomplete sentences on it. See sample sentences on previous page.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Pass out 1 ditto sheet to each student.
  - 2 - Instruct students NOT to write their names on their papers.
  - 3 - Ask the students to fill in the blanks with the first word(s) that come to mind.
  - 4 - Collect sheets.
  - 5 - Ask for a scribe to compile responses as they are read. This may be at the board or on paper.
  - 6 - Read one sentence and all the responses made for it, without comment.
  - 7 - When all responses for the question have been written, check to see that the vocabulary is familiar to all.

SENTENCE COMPLETION Cont'd

- 8 - Ask students to comment on the responses:  
What makes them valid or invalid.
- 9 - Ask students what they have seen or  
experienced that would support or  
contradict these comments.
- 10 - Feedback.

## DISCUSSION SKILLS

## Discussion Skills

The group dynamics of a discussion in a multi-cultural classroom vary because people in some cultures are very verbal whereas people in other cultures stress listening. In order to have a good discussion it is better to have equal amounts of talking, listening contributing, and summing up from all members of the group. It is also important to stress responding directly to what a student has said thus the discussion stays more with the topic.

People are not always aware of how they interact when having a discussion. Too often discussions become monopolized by two or three people. The following activities deal with discussion starters and skills.

These skills should be introduced early in the course. The class should adhere to "rules for discussion" when employing these activities because having a good discussion is a conscious effort. It is especially important in the ESL classroom where some students may not understand what has been said and may need to have ideas repeated or summed up in order to understand.

One value of learning these discussion skills is that they can also be used outside of the classroom when students interact socially.

## BRAINSTORMING

This activity is aimed at getting students to contribute to a discussion. However, brainstorming is not really a discussion per se.

The group is given a topic. Students contribute thoughts or ideas that are related to the topic. No one is allowed to argue or rebutt another person's idea. Because no comments are permitted, there is no criticism of student's ideas. This hopefully provides the non-threatening enviroment needed to have all members of the group participate.

Group cooperation skills are also necessary as the group puts its thoughts and ideas into order and into categories. After the ideas have been categorized they can be used with the second section of this unit called Group Talk.

Categorizing allows students to work cooperatively. It also has students deal with relevancy. Ex. What ideas are relevant to the topic and different areas within the topic.

## Discussion Skills

### BRAINSTORMING

**Goal:** To generate a plenitude of thoughts and ideas on a given subject with a group of students.

To organize these ideas into a coherent category.

To encourage individual participation in a non-threatening atmosphere.

**Objectives:** To obtain a list of ideas on a given subject with everyone in the group contributing.

To categorize these ideas in an organized fashion within a given time span (10 min.) through group participation and decision making.

To share and present the list with the other groups in the class who have worked on the same subject.

**Materials:** Mural paper, magic markers.

**Procedure:**

- 1 - Divide class into groups of 5-6.
- 2 - Provide each group with mural paper and markers.
- 3 - Assign a topic, ex. traveling in the U.S.A, energy sources, horses, music.
- 4 - Explain to the class they will have 10 minutes in which to write down all ideas presented in random order. No one may comment, only contribute.
- 5 - (After 10 min. of brainstorming the groups are given an additional 10 min. to categorize and discuss the ideas generated.)
  - Have students put the ideas they have written down into a semblance of order, using topics and sub-topics.
- 6 - Have class share categorized ideas.
- 7 - Feedback.



## Discussion Skills

### GROUP TALK

Group talk is a guided discussion aimed at making the students aware of the necessary components of a discussion. The discussion is lead by one student in each group. The leader controls the discussion by flashing various cue cards. There is one word on each cue card such as LISTEN, CONTRIBUTE, RELEVANT, SUM-UP and RESTATE. A restatement would not be a simple reiteration of what a person had said, but rather a chance for the listener to express the idea s/he had received from the speaker. The speaker then would have a chance to clarify if his/her meaning had not been presented clearly the first time.

This activity has certain rules. Students must follow the cue cards. This forces the students to focus on the subject, listen intently to their fellow students, and be relevant to the topic.

Summing up many ideas in a few words is difficult. It is a skill that needs constant practice, so we will work with it again in Communication Skills. This activity can and should be used more than once during the session. We suggest using it until the students are functionally proficient and can carry this concept over into free discussions.

## Discussion Skills

### GROUP TALK

- Goals:**
- To develop listening skills and an awareness of group dynamics.
  - To maximize student contribution by means of a structured format.
  - To keep student contributions relevant through a structured format.
  - To develop summary and restatement skills.
- Objectives:**
- Each student will contribute at least one idea for discussion.
  - Each student will be expected to restate an idea that another student has expressed.
  - Students should follow the signal card instructions of the leader.
- Materials:**
- Sets of cue cards marked as follows:  
CONTRIBUTE, RESTATE, RELEVANT, LISTEN, SUM-UP.
  - One set is needed for each small group (5-7 people).
- Procedure:**
- 1 - Choose a topic.
  - 2 - Divide the class into groups.
  - 3 - Have each group choose a leader who will be in charge of flashing the cue cards and generally keeping the discussion moving.
  - 4 - Give one set of cue cards to each leader.
  - 5 - Instruct leader not to talk.
  - 6 - Instruct groups to start the topic discussion. Ask the leaders to flash RESTATE card so that a student in his/her group can introduce the topic and review the task at hand.

## Discussion Skills

### GROUP TALK Cont'd

- 7 - Leader flashes CONTRIBUTE to start the discussion, then follow up with the CONTRIBUTE-RESTATE sequence, using LISTEN and RELEVANT when necessary.
- 8 - Have leader flash SUM-UP after notification that the discussion time has almost ended.
- 9 - Feedback.

Suggestions: The meaning of all the words on the cue cards should be clear before the discussion begins. This entails a prior lesson on the meaning of each card, the use to be made of it, the sequence in which they will be used, and some warm-up practice for restating.

The series of cue card should follow a pattern. CONTRIBUTE is first, followed by RESTATE (after each contribution). This sequence is to get initial ideas flowing, and should be used throughout the discussion. LISTEN is used to inform a student that s/he is not paying attention. RELEVANT is used if a student's contribution is wandering from the subject area. SUM-UP is used at the end of the discussion. The leader should concentrate on organizing the discussion so should not speak or contribute during the discussion.

Follow-up: Repeat the activity on a different day using a different topic. The skills need practice. It also gives different students a chance to be the leader.

## Discussion Skills

### I WONDER ...

In developing discussion skills it is important to reflect and think back on an experience to see what can be further learned from closer examination. These two activities, "I Wonder ..." statements and "I Learned ..." statements are to be used as a summary or feedback session after a field trip or group activity. They provide a structure for asking analytical questions which will help students to raise and verbalize questions which have come to their minds. It will help to clarify and reinforce what they have learned.

In a multi-cultural learning situation in which the focus of an activity is on the target culture (U.S.) it is of the utmost importance for the teacher to provide his/her students with the opportunity to ask questions in a friendly non-threatening environment. This activity will hopefully help to develop a probing analytical attitude on the part of the students which will greatly benefit their study of culture and values. It would be better to introduce this activity early in the course in order that this analytical skill will be utilized during the field trips.

## Discussion Skills

### I WONDER ...

- Goals:** To help students raise and verbalize questions that have arisen in their minds.
- To develop a probing analytical attitude in the classroom.
- Objectives:** To have each student come up with at least five "I wonder statements".
- To have each student share at least two of these questions with the class.
- Materials:** Chalkboard and chalk or mural paper and markers.
- Procedure:** Upon completion of a field trip or a values discussion the teacher does the following:
- 1 - Ask students to complete in writing ten sentences beginning with "I wonder" ex.  
I wonder if ... how come ... about ...  
why ... whether ... when ...  
Give a few examples.
  - 2 - Ask for volunteers to share questions.
  - 3 - Write each statement on the board. This can be done by volunteer or teacher.
  - 4 - Correct grammar as necessary.
  - 5 - Tell students there will be no discussion at this time of the statements made or questions raised since the goal is to stimulate inquiry.
- Follow-up:** After the list is completed on the board, the students could be divided into pairs to discuss the "statements".
- Another day, after the paired discussion the class could have a group discussion on the "statements".

I LEARNED ...

This activity is to be used after a field trip, cultural activity or discussion. It not only provides the teacher with feedback from the last activity but it also helps the students to clarify and reinforce what they have learned. Perhaps most importantly it establishes a searching tone in the classroom whereby students are exposed to each others opinions and ideas in a non-threatening atmosphere in which students are reassured that there are no right or wrong answers. The development of such an environment will greatly benefit the search for an understanding of not only the target cultures but also of each others culture and our own individual thought processes.

## Discussion Skills

### I LEARNED ...

- Goals:**
- To provide feedback on a previous activity.
  - To help clarify and reinforce what the students have learned.
  - To set a searching tone within the group.
  - To provide a summary for almost any activity.
- Objectives:**
- To have each student compose 10 sentences completing the examples given by teacher.
  - To have each student share at least two of these with the class.
- Material:** Chalkboard and chalk or mural paper and markers.
- Procedure:**
- 1 - Prepare on the board the following list of sentence stems:
    - I learned that I ...
    - I realized that I ...
    - I relearned that I ...
    - I noticed that I ...
    - I discovered that I ...
    - I was surprised that I ...
    - I was pleased that I ...
    - I was displeased that I ... etc.
  - 2 - Ask students to think about what they learned about themselves or their values.
  - 3 - Instruct students to complete the 10 sentences. Give examples.
  - 4 - Have students share results in pairs or in small groups.
- Suggestions:** Explain that this is not a discussion period and that students should not feel that they must explain or defend their statements.
- Emphasize that the focus is on personal learning rather than general intellectual learning, therefore, if students do not wish to share their ideas, do not press them.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS



## Communication Skills

This unit is designed to help students improve a necessary functional skill: The skill of using clear, precise language.

It is often difficult for the foreign student to find the exact word s/he needs. Consequently, the result is a long round-about oration. By emphasizing thinking before speaking, some of this can be avoided. Other times a student will assume that the listeners are familiar with a subject and so the output is loose and vague, and the listeners do not understand. In this case, there is a need for more detail and organization.

Three activities are included in this unit. They stress different situations: summarizing, story telling, and direction giving. They all offer practice in using clear, precise language and listening carefully. These activities can be used more than once. This gives the students more practice and allows them to monitor their improvement.

MIRROR IMAGE

This activity emphasizes the importance and precision necessary in conveying verbal instructions. It involves cooperation and a minimal amount of competition. Listening is also very important.

The exercise has one student describe a structure s/he is building with Cuisenaire Rods and instructs another student, who cannot see the structure, to build an identical one. The students have a lot of fun comparing structures and discussing what went wrong, if they were not identical. Oftentimes, one student will know a word that another student does not know. The result is a feeling of camaraderie and vocabulary expansion.

Prior to this activity, prepositions and adjectives should be reviewed such as beside, between, upon, into, on end, end to end, diagonally, cater-cornered, etc. It is advisable for the teacher to demonstrate this activity with a student before the students pick a partner. Partners should have a different native language.

We use rods with this activity, but, paper and pen can also be used to produce a drawing. This activity can be repeated 4-5 times during a session.

MIRROR IMAGE

- Goals:
- To develop in the students the skill of giving precise instructions.
  - To increase listening skills.
  - To create a sense of camaraderie among students.

- Objectives:
- To practice giving instructions verbally.
  - To practice prepositions and command forms.
  - To have students describe their rod models while building them.

Materials: A large set of Cuisenaire Rods.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Teacher demonstrates entire activity with help of one student.
  - 2 - Have students choose partners whose native languages differ.
  - 3 - Give each student in a pair an identical set of rods.
  - 4 - Have pairs turn their desks so that they are sitting back to back.
  - 5 - Have pairs decide which student will be the talker and which will be the listener.
  - 6 - Instruct listeners that they may only say OK or yes after they have completed each instruction. They may not ask questions.
  - 7 - Instruct talkers to explain as precisely as possible how to construct the model they are building. This should be done in a step by step procedure with the talker waiting for the listener to signal that s/he is ready to go on.
  - 8 - Have students compare models. Allow for free conversation.

MIRROR IMAGE Cont'd

- 9 - Switch roles and repeat activity.
- 10 - Feedback: Reactions discussed.

Follow-up: Variations of the activity could consist of permitting the listener to ask yes or no questions.

Another time, the pair could have an open conversation concerning the construction but still not look at others' model. Compare the results when there is more communication.

### BUILDING A MEMORY

This activity focuses on precision and exactness in the description of a location (house, city street, farm, room, etc.). A student volunteer describes a location known only to himself, while building the scene with Cuisenaire Rods. Three skills will be used in this activity: precise language, listening, and restatement. Restatement should be introduced before the activity. (see Discussion Skills, GROUP TALK)

Because the class is focusing on one student and the student is describing a place of special importance to him/her, it is important to have a secure environment in which to experiment with this activity. It is best to explain the activity and then ask for volunteers, rather than to assign the task to a student.

Linguistic correction is treated a little differently in this activity. In order that the student keep his/her train of thought it is important not to interrupt with corrections, but rather wait until s/he has finished speaking. The teacher may then "restate" in sentence form any errors that were made. Example: Student Jose remarks, "Guillermo said that this is his house. Said it had trees green around it". The teacher would restate at the end of the description, "Jose told us this was his house. HE said it had GREEN TREES around it"..

BUILDING A MEMORY

- Goals:
- To organize an activity in which the student shares something of personal importance.
  - To emphasize precision in communication.
  - To develop better listening skills.
- Objectives:
- To have each student take a turn describing a location and building the scene with rods.
  - To have students practice restating information.
  - To have students formulate questions about the location described.
- Materials:
- Box of Cuisenaire Rods.
- Procedure:
- 1 - Explain that a volunteer will create a place that is known only to him/her, using rods and verbal descriptions.
  - 2 - Ask for volunteer.
  - 3 - Instruct other students to listen only.
  - 4 - As the description proceeds and the teller pauses to think, ask another student to restate segments of the story. During the restatement there are to be no questions.
  - 5 - Correct the "restater" by restating correctly. (see example on preceding page).
  - 6 - When the teller has finished, inform the students they may now ask relevant questions about the location that has been described.
  - 7 - Feedback.
- Suggestions:
- Since this activity requires concentration and cooperation by the group, we recommend that only two descriptions per day be planned in order to keep enthusiasm high.

ARTICLE SUMMARY

This activity is designed to give students practice in choosing the appropriate word, expressing themselves clearly and filtering out unimportant information. It also encourages reading English newspapers and magazines. The students are asked to choose an article from some journal and present the important vocabulary words and the essence of the story. Since they are only permitted to introduce five or six new vocabulary words, they must simplify the vocabulary while summarizing the article.

This activity is useful because it shows the students that they can talk about current events although they may not have the specialized vocabulary for such topics as science or economics. It also exposes the student to twenty to twenty five new words while they are preparing the assignment or listening to another students summary. By sharing news articles in class, students can keep up with current events without having to study the newspaper for hours at home. The presentations are also good discussion starters.

Students should bring the article to class so that information will be readily available for the questioning after the presentation.

ARTICLE SUMMARY

- Goals:
- To increase student's ability to summarize accurately.
  - To expand student's vocabulary.
  - To give students the chance to present news that interests them.
  - To keep students updated in current events.

- Objectives:
- To have a student act as "teacher" in presenting vocabulary.
  - To have a student present the information from one news article in 5 minutes.
  - To give students practice in detecting the essentials in an article and eliminating the unnecessary details.

- Materials:
- Newspaper or magazine articles supplied by students.

- Procedures:
- 1 - Assign students to prepare one news article for the following day. (homework)
  - 2 - Write procedures to be followed on board.
    - I. Title of the article.
    - II. Vocabulary (5-6 word maximum).
    - III. Article (content in 5 minutes).
    - IV. Questions from classmates.
  - 3 - On the next day: Write procedure on board again.
  - 4 - Ask for volunteer.



ARTICLE SUMMARY Cont'd

- 5 - Make sure the student follows the procedure.
- 6 - Allow for questions.
- 7 - Clarify if necessary.
- 8 - Open the topic for discussion. (If desired)

Suggestions: It is not necessary to have all the students present their articles on the same day. Three per day is sufficient.

If the class is large, students can present to smaller groups of not more than six.

INTERVIEW SKILLS

## INTERVIEW SKILLS

To interview is to visit and question someone in order to obtain opinions or information. For the student engaged in studying U.S. culture, interviewing Americans is one of the most effective forms of gathering information. This unit focuses on giving the ESL student practice in formulating appropriate questions, asking these questions, and reporting back to the class.

Good interviewing includes all of the skill areas that have preceded this unit. It is for this reason we have placed this unit last. By now the students should have some idea of how they portray themselves and how others see them. If they have examined U.S. culture they hopefully, have an understanding of appropriate behavior and can transfer this feeling of appropriateness to their questions. If they have worked with Communication Skills one would hope they would emphasize precise, clear, well thought out questions.

This unit is the final step in preparation for Section II Outreach: An Experiential Approach to American Culture. Section II has tasks that require students to go into the community and interview various people. The purpose of this unit is to develop the necessary skills which aid the pupils in preparing and organizing for such an excursion. It is hoped they will become skilled at asking questions which will lead to a greater insight into American culture.

## INTERVIEW OBSERVATIONS

This activity requires observation and listening skills as well as organizational skills. It does not require that the student interview another person. This is the introductory activity for Interview Skills and should provide information necessary for the other activities that follow. Advanced preparation is required.

The students are asked to watch a talk show on television where different famous T.V. personalities are interviewed and report back with five questions the interviewer asked and five observations about the interviewer's style.

It must be pointed out to the students what they are to look for in the interview. Ideas for this advanced preparation may be obtained from the students through BRAINSTORMING (see Discussion Skills). In class then, students can offer suggestions as to the type of questions interviewers ask, and place them according to various categories, such as: Personal, Occupational, Political, Historic, Expertise, General Knowledge, etc. Later they may wish to discuss interview styles such as: direct, mostly listening, mostly conversation, etc.

## INTERVIEW OBSERVATION

- Goals:**
- To give students an opportunity to study experienced interviewers.
  - To use T.V. as an educational tool for exploration of U.S. culture.
  - To provide the basis for interviews conducted by the students.
- Objectives:**
- To introduce students to interview skills.
  - To have students write down and categorize 5 questions and observations from a televised interview.
  - To give practice in listening skills.
- Materials:**
- Make sure a television is accessible to all students in the class. They may pair up.
  - A listing of times and channels for various interview shows: Johnny Carson, Dick Cavett, Phil Donahue, Mike Douglas, Dinah Shore, David Frost, etc.
- Procedure:**
- 1 - Write names of various entertainers on board.
  - 2 - Ask students if they know anything about any of the people listed.
  - 3 - Explain that they are interviewers and that their jobs entail asking questions to famous people (stars, authors, sports figures, experts, etc.)
  - 4 - Post times that the T.V. shows are on in your area.
  - 5 - Have students pick 2 shows that are convenient for them to watch.
  - 6 - Make sure that most of the shows are covered.

INTERVIEW OBSERVATIONS Cont'd

- 7 - Ask students to watch the shows they have chosen and write down 5 questions the interviewer asked and 5 observations about each interviewer.
- 8 - Allow 2-3 days as students might have plans for the first night of the assignment.
- 9 - Ask students for various general categories for the questions the interviewer asked.
- 10 - Have students in groups of 3-4 categorize their questions. Ask them to examine why the interviewer asked different questions of different persons.
- 11 - Open a discussion by asking students to describe the various styles of the interviewers.
- 12 - Feedback.

### SIMULATED INTERVIEWS

This activity gives the students the chance to practice their interviewing in a non-threatening environment. It also includes some imagination and acting on the part of students. Listening skills are also stressed.

Students are asked to choose a famous person, dead or alive, whom they would like to become for the purpose of an interview. They may choose stars, political figures, sports people, inventors, etc.

They are instructed to write a short introductory paragraph and ten questions they would like to be asked as the famous person. As the students work in pairs they may wish to set the scene like one of the T.V. interviewers they have seen. This activity can become humorous if the students decide to "ham it up". However, the value of the activity should not be lost to slapstick and the teacher should return the class to the mood of a "real" interview.

By presenting the scenarios, or watching them, the students are exposed to a variety of questions and styles of questioning. Hopefully, they are expanding their repertoire of questions so that they will be prepared when the time comes for them to do a real interview.

SIMULATED INTERVIEWS

- Goals:
- To give students an opportunity to practice their interviewing skills.
  - To provide an entertaining format for students to engage in conversation.
  - To give students the opportunity to speak in front of the group in a relaxed and informal setting.
  - To give students a chance to act in a role they have chosen.

- Objectives:
- To have students write down and perform an interview of their choice.
  - To have other students ask interview questions spontaneously.

Materials: Script provided by students.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Explain that students will be asked to assume the role of a famous person of their choosing.
  - 2 - Instruct students to write interview questions they would like to be asked. (This can be a homework assignment if desired.)
  - 3 - Have the students practice interviewing in pairs.
  - 4 - Ask students to perform their interview in pairs. One pair at a time. Three skits a day should be sufficient.
  - 5 - Open the interview to questions from the audience.
  - 6 - Feedback.



ACTUAL INTERVIEW

This is the students' chance to be a reporter. They must incorporate their knowledge of interviewing and their use of the English language to find out about American culture and lifestyle.

Students are asked to split into small groups and interview various people involved with the school, ex. (Director, Assistant Director, secretary, teachers, etc.) in order to make some generalizations or assumptions about American habits, interests, and values. The questions are left up to the students but they should be encouraged to ask a variety of questions such as: education, ambitions, how free time is spent, marital status, family size, etc.

Students love this exercise because it gives them license to ask the questions they have never dared to ask before. They are also amazed at the variety of answers, when they discuss in groups afterward. One word of caution, remind students that it is not culturally acceptable to ask about salary or how much a person pays for apartments, cars, etc.

The focus here is on having students pose questions that will help them get sufficient information to make a comparison of lifestyles.

ACTUAL INTERVIEW

Goals: To give students insight into American culture through interviewing individuals.

To have students cooperate in performing an interview.

To start students thinking about culturally bound suggestions.

Objectives: To have students work together to develop a list of questions to ask their American subject.

To have students ask these questions and interpret the answers according to American culture.

To allow students to openly discuss their findings.

Materials: One American willing to be interviewed per every 2-3 members of the class.

- Procedure:
- 1 - Explain to the class this is the day they will perform a real interview.
  - 2 - Name each person willing to be interviewed, giving a short identifying description.
  - 3 - Have students choose the person they would like to interview. Make sure there are no more than 3 students per person.
  - 4 - Have students make a list of questions including various topics that will help them to receive an overall view of the lifestyle and interests of the person interviewed.
  - 5 - Have them divide the questions so each student has some questions to ask.
  - 6 - Send them out to speak with the subjects. (15 minutes) Then return to classroom.

## Interview Skills

### ACTUAL INTERVIEW Cont'd

- 7 - Ask interview teams to discuss their findings and prepare a short factual summary about their interviewee.
- 8 - Have students present summary to rest of class.
- 9 - Open the discussion to comparisons - family size, educational background, ambitions, attitudes, etc.
- 10 - Feedback.

## Section II

### Outreach: An Experiential Approach to American Culture

In Section I we concentrated on setting a learning environment where students could learn from each other. We focused on cultural backgrounds, value systems, group dynamics and various skills for examining and discussing these factors while learning English. In Section II we hope to expand the use of these skills and awareness by taking the students into the community. This is the practical implementation of examining U.S. culture and how the student's backgrounds influence their perceptions of American culture.

The class must decide on one topic or problem in which they all have an interest and that can be researched in the community. Plans can then be made for them to visit local businesses, factories, or organizations which will provide the information desired to help them understand more about American culture. Locations should be chosen where students will have an opportunity to not only observe, but to interview and, if possible, participate.

Example topics are:

- Volunteer organizations
- Free community services
- Small businesses - how they contribute to the community
- American attitudes toward current concerns - such as energy or food sources
- Big businesses - how they affect the community

Once a topic has been chosen, students can start formulating questions and writing criteria for information they wish to ask from various contact people. Students will be prepared to start this if they have already worked with the skills from Section I such as Observation/Judgement, Generalization, Discussion, Communication and Interviews. At the same time the teacher can be deciding on appropriate sites to visit and be gathering preparatory information.

When this work has been completed and dates and times set for visits have been established, the students should fill out a Pre-Outreach Guideline Form that asks the students what they already know about the topic and what they expect to learn. During the visit to the site students are encouraged to take notes and ask questions they have prepared. For homework the students should complete the Post-Outreach Guideline form that asks what they have learned from their visit and any reactions they may have had. The next day the teacher may initiate a discussion using the Outreach Guideline Form as a starter. Other projects such as debates, special reports, and opinion polls may also follow the outreach experience.

This section contains directions and forms for a Teacher's Advance Information Sheet and a Student's Outreach Form, followed by a series of alternative follow-up activities. A section on food and energy source site reports concludes the project.

The Advance Information Sheet provides an outline for questions the teacher needs to ask before sending students to a location. It also gives hints on how to present oneself tactfully in order to receive full cooperation from site personnel.

The Outreach Guideline Form is a standard questionnaire that can be used to start students thinking about their outreach experience beforehand, and help them to sort out their reactions afterwards. It is useful to the students because they can think of what they have experienced and what they have learned. To the teacher it is useful for providing feedback. Six follow-up activities are offered to help students apply their recently learned skills to their outreach experience.

The Site Report section includes an explanation of our rationale for choosing the sample topics: Energy Sources and Food Sources. This is followed by descriptions of several locations in Brattleboro, Vermont and in western Massachusetts. Teachers in the area may wish to use this section as a reference. For other teachers it can be used to demonstrate the variety of possibilities that can be explored within a topic. Write-ups also demonstrate what type of information should be kept on file to aid colleagues at a later date.

## Teacher's Advance Information Sheet

The Teacher's Advance Information Sheet is designed to be used as a guide when a teacher is researching a prospective site for an outreach activity. It includes the basic questions a teacher would want to ask before arranging for a field experience. It is helpful in organizing thoughts as well as keeping details about one site separate from another. These completed forms can be kept on file for other teachers' use or for later reference. (For examples see Site Reports.)

The following hints on researching a site come from personal experience. We hope they will spare you some of the mistakes we made when originally doing our preparation of sites.

1 - This research can be done over the telephone or in person. We suggest going to the site in person after an appointment has been made. In this way the contact person will have time to spend with you and you will be able to have your questions answered more thoroughly.

2 - Be sure to identify yourself and your school first.

3 - Express the fact that you are interested in their business and the community as a whole.

4 - Explain what type of students you teach and your objectives.

5 - Explain the purpose for your questions.

6 - Ask the questions in a conversational manner.

Do not make it sound like an interrogation.

7 - Ask them for any suggestions they may have in making your students' visit more enjoyable and informative. (This makes them feel that you are willing to cooperate by conforming to company policy or the way things are generally done.)

8 - Express what you had in mind.

9 - If all factors seem agreeable, make an appointment at their convenience. Of course, you can suggest a day and time.

10 - Thank them for their cooperation and tell them how excited you are about the prospective experience.

11 - After the outreach activity is completed, be sure a written thank you is sent.



TEACHER'S ADVANCE INFORMATION SHEET

Name of Company or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Location: Is it easily accessible? \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Type of service/function \_\_\_\_\_

Type of people who use this service \_\_\_\_\_

Volume of business \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose for service \_\_\_\_\_

Philosophy of company or organization (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Historical background information if necessary, founded by, why, etc.

Would they be willing to have a foreign student interview the contact person, employee, or other qualified person?

Would they accept an intern (apprentice, employee) for a day?

Would they be willing to show a group around? When?

Good Points

Bad points of operation

Reactions to contact person

Additional comments

## Outreach Guideline Form

The Outreach Guideline Form is divided into 2 parts. The first part helps the students to prepare mentally for their field experience. It asks them to reflect on what they already know about the subject and to project about what they may learn from the experience. It also asks for any opinions or feelings they may have about the excursion. The second part is used after the outreach activity. It asks for physical descriptions, reactions, cultural observations, conclusions, and what the student feels s/he has learned.

We have included this form because we feel it covers topics that help to examine an outreach activity thoroughly. As a result, more knowledge and insight is gained from the experience. The form is useful for the student because s/he can gauge her/his personal growth by comparing the pre and post experience sheets. It is also good for the teacher who doesn't know where to start when approaching an outreach activity. The form can be used as a discussion starter before and/or after the field experience.

We suggest handing out both forms at once so that the student will know what to look for during the experience. The post-experience form should be filled out directly after the field activity or for homework that night.

When the forms are distributed the teacher should give special consideration to explaining what is asked in the questions. If the students cannot understand the question

the answer will be inaccurate.

Pay special attention to section C, description. This not only asks for a short physical description, but also a description of how people interacted. Cultural comparisons can be made at this point. How do employees in your country talk to their superiors? How do bosses interact with workers? etc.

This form is basically for the students to keep an account of the learning experience. The teacher may ask to read these in order to evaluate the field activity. However, if a student does not wish to reveal what s/he has written, the teacher should not force the issue.

STUDENT'S OUTREACH GUIDELINE FORM

Pre-Outreach Experience

A. Site

B. 1 - What do you know about this subject?

2 - What do you expect to observe during this experience?

3 - Do you have any thoughts or feelings concerning this experience? If so, what are they?

## OUTREACH GUIDELINE FORM

### Post-Outreach Experience

C. 1 - What did you observe? (physical description of site, description of employees, interaction between employees and between boss and workers.)

2 - What conclusions or judgements did you make from your observations?

D. 1 - What did you learn?

2 - Have your opinions changed since your visit? Why?

3 - What observations or situations caused you to react strongly? (either positive or negative)

## OUTREACH PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP

After exploring a topic such as food or energy sources and most of the alternatives, it is advisable to have some kind of follow-up to conclude the program. Follow-ups can tie up loose ends, answer any questions that may exist, and evaluate the program as a whole. We offer six follow-up activities.

1 - The most common form of gathering information is probably a general discussion. This is a traditional activity and very valid for airing views and concerns. It is also helpful in gauging enthusiasm for the project as a whole. The Outreach Guideline Form can be used as a discussion starter.

2 - For teachers wishing a more structured approach, they may refer to I Wonder... or I Learned... (see Discussion Skills), where students formulate their statements on a subject before general discussion.

3 - With an upper level class, a debate is always fun and informative. Most students will want to research a topic further so this activity cannot be used directly after a field experience. Allow students to choose the side they want to be on. Students who have no preference can be judges and one student can be the moderator. Another class can also be asked to watch the debate and act as judges. To give students practice in formal presentations, we would recommend using a formal debate style where each side has a certain amount of time for presentation, rebuttal and concluding re-

marks. Keeping this format also helps discourage lengthy arguments between two people.

4 - After some discussion students may feel they want more information from members living in the community. They may wish to write an opinion questionnaire and poll their neighbors or survey other people from the local area.

5 - Students may wish to do a project on their own that they could present to the class. Ex. If the topic was food sources, a student may wish to research food additives or preservatives or the reasons behind vegetarianism.

6 - Another type of project would be for the student to write a paper or essay. This is a worthwhile activity because it encompasses grammar and writing style as well as opinions, facts and information. The student has a feeling of accomplishment when s/he completes writing a paper on a topic that interests him/her. S/he can also take the paper back to her/his native country and read it over when desired. It is tangible evidence of achievement in the English Language. Suggestions for papers are:

- a. reactions to the outreach program
- b. projections for the future in regards to the topic
- c. possible solutions to the problems studied

Of course there are many other alternatives for ending an outreach program. We hope our suggestions may help you in planning a conclusion or may have triggered some ideas of your own.

### Site Reports: Food Sources and Energy Sources

This section contains the rationale and "leg-work" on two topics, Food Sources and Energy Sources. We explain why we chose these topics and give reports on relevant outreach sites in the southern Vermont area and western Massachusetts. The Teacher's Advance Information Sheet was used while gathering the information for the site reports. All data was compiled in 1979.

The site reports can be used by Brattleboro area teachers as a reference for outreach experiences. Other teachers may wish to study the format for writing their own site reports or to get ideas about many possibilities for investigating and exploring in depth within a topic area.



## Energy Sources and Food Sources

We chose energy sources and food sources because we wanted to explore the subjects about which our students would have some previous knowledge obtained in their native countries. From the cultural standpoint, we wanted to demonstrate the alternatives available in the U.S. and how Americans utilized these sources. We also found these topics controversial. This hopefully, would add more enthusiasm for the projects.

Energy and food are a daily part of everyone's life. They are part of basic survival. All cultures have some form of food distribution. The U.S. offers a variety of sources for the consumer: supermarkets, health and natural food stores, co-ops, variety stores, farmers markets, and in some areas, open markets. All of these alternatives serve the same function but for various reasons. Some serve the masses, others only a select group. This is where American lifestyle differs. When examining these differences in lifestyles, American values must be discussed. By observing the clientele of these sources, foreign students can comment on prevailing attitudes and concerns in the U.S. They may also wish to debate the need for alternatives to the market.

Energy sources are a growing concern world-wide. It is safe to say that imported oil is a major influence on our economy. Americans are being forced to cut back and use alternative methods in order to supplement our constant

need for energy. Foreign students are interested in what we personally and as a country are doing in improve the current energy situation.

We have always had one alternative: hydro-electric (water) power. In the past 50 years we have been developing nuclear and solar energy sources. The home owner is fighting back by insulating more completely and returning to the wood burning stove.

By examining why 6% of the world's population, (American) needs one third of the energy used in the world, foreign students can get a very good look at American life-style. Most students know something about energy sources in their countries. This helps them compare attitudes, values and consumption habits in their country with those of Americans.

### SUN CO-OP

Site: 93 Boltwood Walk, Amherst, Massachusetts

Contact: Bud (413) 256-8401 for information and appointment

The Sun Co-op is a non-profit co-operative founded in 1972. It began as a buying club in which members ordered food in bulk once a week and distributed it in the basement of a building at the University of Massachusetts. It has gradually expanded into a regular store front operation open to members and non-members six days a week.

The Co-op is run by four full time managers and the labor of its five hundred members. It has low overhead and is interested in covering its costs of operations not in making a profit. There is a twelve member board of directors, elected by the co-op members, who meet once a month to formulate policy and decide what is to be sold.

In order to join the co-op, a prospective member must attend a two hour orientation meeting in which the history of the co-op is presented along with an orientation to the physical layout of the store and an explanation of job assignments. Each member is required to work two hours per month in exchange for a 20% discount on all items.

The co-op is dedicated to providing high quality natural foods at the lowest possible prices. It is also concerned with providing nutritional education. They put out a weekly newsletter and give lectures on nutrition to any community organization that requests it.

O.K. FAIRBANKS SUPERMARKET

Site: Putney Road, Brattleboro, Vermont

Contact: Mr. Alan Weeks, Manager

The O.K. Fairbanks Supermarket opened seven years ago. It is a very large enterprise that employs 75 people and averages a total monthly retail sales of \$400,000. The store is divided into six departments.

O.K. Fairbanks not only provides a variety of basic foods it also has a gourmet food section, household goods, cleaning, health and beauty sections. By dealing in such large volume, they are able to provide the public with lower prices. O.K. is also open seven days a week.

Mr. Weeks feels the food business on such a large scale is very demanding in terms of not only long hours but also dealing with the public. It is a very impersonal atmosphere in which many problems arise such as shoplifting, passing of bad checks and in general inconsiderate shopping habits.

LLAMA, TOUCUM & CROW

Site: Main Street, Brattleboro, Vermont

Contact: Susan Coffee (802) 254-5376

Llama, Toucum & Crow is a privately owned natural food store whose policy is to provide unadulterated foods (no chemical additives). It has a wide variety of herbs, spices, teas, produce, grains, nuts, vitamins, cheeses, juices and fresh baked goods. It also has a complete selection of high priced cooking equipment and utensils.

Llama is too expensive and limited to provide an alternative to the supermarket. The bulk of business is comprised of people looking for specific items, or wandering through buying "bits and pieces" rather than a weekly supply of food. The tourist trade provides a good percentage of sales as reflected by the increase in business in the summer and fall months.

The policy of the store is people-oriented and if someone wants something that isn't stocked, they will do their best to order it if at all possible.

### BRATTLEBORO AREA FARMERS MARKET

Site: Route 9 West Brattleboro (100yds west of covered bridge)

Contact: Wally Brown 843-2442 & Mark Rogers 257-7751

The Farmers Market is open every Saturday from mid-June until mid-October, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The market provides the community with access to local produce, baked goods, and crafts. It also provides the small farmer with the opportunity to sell quality produce directly to the consumer.

Any local resident may set up a space to sell produce, baked goods, and crafts. There is a 5% fee of the total sale which helps cover operation costs. After the second visit, vendors are asked to pay a \$5.00 Membership Fee. Also growers must produce 75% of what they sell.

The following report was written by a local vendor:

"The Farmers Market is not just another place to sell fresh produce, canned jams and jellies, plants, luncheon plates and delicious desserts. Although the Brattleboro Area Farmers Market does indeed have all of those things, it is much more. It is a small community of people who come together once a week to sell their own locally grown produce or homemade goods. It is also a place to gather, a place to sell, a place to talk about growing crops and raising animals, and a place to share ideas on dozens of topics.

As a vendor, I found it absolutely essential to bring a friend to help me sell my wares so that I could have time to walk around the market to visit and exchange goods and to chat with each one of the buyers about the best way to care for the plants or cook the produce they had purchased. There is no rush, no need to wait in line, and no crowding or pushing at the tables. It's a friendly place to shop. Essentially, the market is set for the community, run by the community, and is a fun place to shop and visit."

## PUTNEY GENERAL STORE

Site: Putney, Vermont

Contact: Mr. John McPherson for information and appointment

The Putney General Store is a family owned and operated enterprise. It sells fresh produce, cheese and other dairy products, beer and wine, and a large selection of gourmet foods. Now the largest store in Putney, it began as a grist mill in 1789. It was not until 1843 that it was converted to a general store.

The clientele is divided evenly between locals and tourists. The greatest sales are between May and November.

The owner, Mr. Phillips, enjoys running the store because of its personal atmosphere. He feels modern supermarkets are impersonal and take more time if the shopper is only looking for a few items.

MT. TOM POWER STATION

HOLYOKE WATER POWER COMPANY  
(oil burning electricity)

Site: Holyoke, Massachusetts

Contact: Bill Cahill (413) 536-5520

The Mt. Tom Station was built in 1960. Until 1970 it burned coal to produce electricity. In 1970 the operation converted to oil because oil was cheaper. In 1970 one barrel of oil cost \$1.80. Today the price is \$23.00 per barrel. With the price of oil rising rapidly, it is now a possibility that the plant may switch back to coal.

The Mt. Tom Station is owned by the Holyoke Power Company which is a subsidiary of New England Utilities. N.E. Utilities is a public utility which supplies most of the state of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts with electricity. The electricity is sent to a major distribution center in Springfield, Massachusetts and from there goes to factories and industries in the area. It produces 150 megawatts/hr. of electricity; enough for the towns of Holyoke and Northampton. The station is operated by four men plus one man who monitors the entire operation from the highly sophisticated control center.

Water from the Connecticut River is used to cool the condensers but there is no difference in water temperature one half mile above or below the plant. There are strict Federal regulations concerning how much water the plant may use.



## VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Site: Vernon, Vermont

Contact: Mr. Hodgekins for Information and Appointment

Construction of the Vermont Yankee Power Plant was first begun in 1967 and it was put into operation in 1972. It produces 540 megawatts of electricity per hour. Fifty-five percent of the electricity is sent to the central distribution grid in Springfield, Massachusetts where eleven public utilities buy it.

The plant produces energy by a process called fission which is the splitting of atoms. This process takes place in the nuclear reactors with two types of uranium atoms. 98% of the uranium used is called "Uranium 238" which is not radioactive but the other 2% called "Uranium 235" is radioactive. The splitting of these uranium atoms produces tremendous energy which produces steam to power four turbines which turn a giant generator. The production of steam is radioactive so it must be contained within a very secure leak-proof structure.

When we were inside the nuclear plant we wore protective gear (rubber boots, gloves and coat) to protect ourselves from any radioactivity that might leak from the reactors.

The most dangerous by-product of this process is the highly radioactive uranium rods after they have been used. Spent rods are now stored in 40 feet of water inside the plant but in ten years the storage capacity will be reached

and another solution will have to be found in regard to what to do with the waste. These used uranium rods are also very dangerous because they can be fairly easily converted to plutonium from which atom bombs are produced.

It costs \$12 million to refuel the plants annually. It is still the cheapest source of electricity. It costs \$35 to produce a megawatt by oil, \$15 by hydro-electric power, and \$6 by atomic power.

Our guide, Mr. Hodgekins, acknowledged the fact that there is some concern over the safety of the atomic power plant, but he thought that basically it was safe if not safer than other forms of electricity production. He also stated that "We are coming to the point with the oil situation that we don't really have much choice. If we want to be independent of the oil producing nations and keep our standard of living at its present level we must continue with atomic power. Solar energy could work but it must be developed and it is still years away as a practical alternative."

## RENEWABLE ENERGY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Site: High Street, Northampton, Massachusetts

Contact: (413) 586-6262

The Renewable Energy Demonstration Project was started in March 1979. It is CETA funded. One man, Cort Surcliff, along with a few friends developed a proposal for the federal government. The main purpose of REDP is to build models that use alternative energy for production of heat for central heating, hot water, ovens, greenhouses; etc. Their focus is solar energy although they do have plans for developing wind, water and decomposition. Their models do not include plans for power plants or mass production of energy. However, Cort Surcliff stated he thought that solar energy has been developed so that it could be used for it.

REDP is an information project. They take their models to fairs, farmers markets and schools. They work closely with the Chamber of Commerce and other community organizations. If the people are interested or need help building something in their home, they can drop by REDF for advice. However, that is not the major purpose of this program.

They were not receptive to requests to have a student visit with them for a day. When a quick tour was suggested they explained that that was not their function. They suggested going to see their exhibit in the center of town the next time they "set up". REDP is good for information, not for internships or field trips.

## HADLEY FALLS HYDROELECTRIC PLANT

Site: Holyoke, Massachusetts

Contact: (413) 536-5520 for information and appointment

The Hadley Falls Hydroelectric plant is located on the Connecticut River and it is owned by the Holyoke Power Company which is a subsidiary of New England Utilities.

Electricity is produced when water drops fifty feet from the dam into a water wheel turbine which powers the generator. The plant can produce 15 megawatts/hr. of electricity which is 1/8 of the capacity of the Hoover Dam plant, the largest in the United States. The cost of operating the plant is low because they need only pay two fulltime employees and maintenance fees, unlike oil, coal or atomic power plants which must pay an ever increasing price for their source of power.

Bob Kalkans, who showed us around the plant, told us that there are many hydroelectric plants throughout New England which have been inactive for many years. With the recent rise in fossil fuel costs, small hydroelectric plants which ten years ago were considered uneconomical to restore, are now very economical. Mr. Kalkans feels by restoring and building new hydroelectric plants we can decrease our dependency on foreign oil while developing other sources of power. He is not ruling out nuclear power but he feels more research is necessary to assure its reliability and safety.

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